

BOOKS Printed for J. A. Wood
Opposite the Exchange
A
LETTER

FROM A
VIRGINIAN
TO THE
Members of the Congress
TO BE HELD AT
PHILADELPHIA,
ON
The First of SEPTEMBER, 1774.

J. Boucher

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LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

IN times of public danger, every man has a right to offer his advice; there are some men who think it their duty to do it, although on common occasions they may be naturally too diffident of their own opinions, or too indolent, to give themselves the trouble to obtrude them on the world. If such men happen to mistake their talents, not from vanity, but from an excess of zeal, and meddle officiously with matters above

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their reach, they may be forgiven on the score of their intention: Even a modest man is apt to over-rate his own judgment where his affections and interests are deeply concerned.

My zeal therefore in the common cause must serve for my excuse, if in the course of this letter I should give my opinion more confidently than I ought to do, and seem to think myself, which is a very common case, much wiser than I am.

You are soon to meet on the most serious occasion that ever presented itself to this country since its existence.

The harmony which subsisted, with little or no interruption, between Great-Britain and her Colonies, from their very infancy until of late, is in danger of being destroyed
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for ever. The habits of kindness and affection, on one side, and of respect and obedience, on the other (which prevailed during so long a period, were in the highest degree conducive to the prosperity of this country in particular, and are still necessary to its security and happiness) are changed into murmurings, discontents, and reproaches; and will soon end, without some very extraordinary interposition, in mutual and implacable hatred. Complaints of grievances, real or imaginary, are heard from one end of these Colonies to the other; the minds of the people appear to be agitated as at some great crisis; they wish, by a public consultation, to be assured of the general opinion, by a representation of every province, to collect the calm, deliberate determination of all the provinces, to establish some public mark of mutual confidence, that they may hold it up to the parent

country, in all its weight and importance. For this purpose, Gentlemen, you are delegated to the Congress. An absolute, perfect representation of the people, never existed perhaps, but in theory. You, it is true, have not been summoned, or convened, by any formal constitutional authority, or invested with any legislative powers: But you have been chosen as freely as the circumstances of the times would admit; with less cabal and intrigue than is usually employed for a seat in many of our legal provincial Assemblies, and without even the suspicion of venality, which is but too frequently and too generally practised among us for that purpose. Your persons, characters and principles, are familiarly known to your constituents; you have been recommended by the most honourable of all interests, the general opinion of your knowledge, abilities and virtues. We look up to you as the oracles of our country; your opinions will
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have the effect of laws, on the minds of the people, and your resolves may decide the fate of America. All orders of men, who enjoy the happiness of living under a free government, may boldly assume the character of politicians; they inherit a right to it as much as the proudest Peer inherits a right to his seat in Parliament, however ridiculous the proportion may appear to the conceit and arrogance of men who think themselves born to domineer over their fellow-creatures at pleasure. High birth and fortune, when they are not abused, confer the solid and splendid advantages of education and accomplishments, extensive influence, and incitement to glory; but they give no exclusive title to common sense, wisdom, or integrity. The lowest orders of men in such a country, have an unalienable property in their industry, their liberty, and their lives, and may be allowed to set some value at least on the only property they can boast

boast of: These may be all endangered, or lost, by the conduct of their Governors; they have therefore a right, as freemen, to examine their conduct, to censure, to condemn it; without this right the freest government on earth would soon degenerate into the rankest tyranny. The great outlines, the fundamental principles of our constitution, are within the reach of almost every man's capacity; they require little more than leisure to study them, memory to retain them, and candour to form a true judgment of them: unhappily for the order and peace of society, this inestimable privilege is but too often abused. Men in general are governed more by their temper than their judgment; they have little leisure and still less inclination, to inform themselves exactly of the necessary constitutional powers of the supreme Magistrate, or of their own legal rights; they have been often told that liberty is a very great blessing;

blessing; they talk incessantly of it, they find something enchanting in the very sound of the word; ask them the meaning of it, they think you design to affront them; push them to a definition, they give you at once a description of the state of nature. Their ideas of the nature, origin and conditions of civil society in general, are just as confused and inaccurate; they take their political as they do their religious opinions (upon trust) from the nursery, the company they fall into, or the professions and scenes in which they are accidentally engaged. They find the movement of the passions a more easy and agreeable exercise than the drudgery of sober and dispassionate enquiry. Hand-bills, news-papers, party-pamphlets, are the shallow and turbid sources from whence they derive their notions of government; these they pronounce as confidently and dogmatically, as if a political problem was to be solved as clearly as a mathematical one;

one; and as if a bold assertion amounted to a demonstration.

Ambition and lust of power above the laws, are such predominant passions in the breasts of most men, even of men who escape the infection of other vices, that liberty, legal liberty, would be in continual danger of encroachments, if it were not guarded by perpetual jealousy. Crafty, designing knaves, turbulent demagogues, quacks in politics, and impostors in patriotism, have in all free governments, and in all ages, availed themselves of this necessary spirit of jealousy; and by broaching doctrines unknown to the constitution, under the name of constitutional principles, by bold assertions, partial representations, false colourings, wrested constructions, and tragical declamations, have frequently imposed on the credulity of the well-meaning, deluded multitude. Thus the most honourable
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cause that wise and good men can engage in, the cause of liberty, has been often disgraced; nations once as free and as happy as ourselves, have been frightened into anarchy, plunged into all the horrors of a civil war, and ended their miserable career in the most humiliating and abject slavery, until the sacred name of liberty has become a word of scorn and mockery in the mouths of tyrants, and their abandoned minions and emissaries.

Such are the calamities which have frequently arisen from an ardent mistaken zeal, and from the false refinements of speculative men, who amuse themselves and the world, with visionary ideas of perfection, which never were, nor ever will be found, either in public or in private life. You, Gentlemen, cannot even be suspected of being under the influence of such delusions; there are many among you who are eminently learned, not only in the laws of the

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land, but in the laws of nature and nations, in the general laws of reason and justice, who know their authority and revere them, not as they have been sometimes explained on the narrow illiberal principles of party spirit, but as they have been understood and acknowledged by the wise of all ages, and have served for the basis of the most perfect systems of legislation. These are the only rules by which all political opinions ought to be tried and examined, by which an honest man and a good citizen can form a true judgment of the duty he owes to his King and his Country.

It would have been happy for the world on many melancholy occasions, that the revealed will of God, which ought to be the sole rule of every man's conduct, the only transcendent authority from which there lies no appeal, had never received but one general interpretation with regard to
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the reciprocal duties of the Sovereign and the people : but even that sacred and eternal standard of right and wrong, in private life has been alternately perverted and profaned in the political world, by the indiscreet zeal and wild passions of mad enthusiasts, or slavish bigots ; has been equally abused, to serve the purposes of a Charles or a Cromwell, of a Gregory or a Vener, to throw a veil over the horrors of anarchy and rebellion, or to sanctify the ridiculous and damnable doctrines of non-resistance and passive-obedience, on a proper application of the general doctrines and principles I have mentioned, to the peculiar and local circumstances of this country ; your proceedings and resolves ought to depend by a competent knowledge of the character of the times, when the Colony charters were granted ; of the Kings, by whom they were granted ; of the People, to whom they were granted ;

of the purposes for which they were asked and obtained ; of the tenor and spirit of the charters themselves, how they were understood, and construed by our Ancestors: by a knowledge in short of the history of our country, we may discover the general constitution of the Colonies, and be able to judge whether the present discontents are founded on truth or ignorance.

By a due and candid examination of this very interesting subject, it may perhaps appear, that the character of the times, when most of the charters were originally granted, bore very little resemblance to the present times; that the inestimable privileges of a modern Englishman, might indeed be found, in some degree, in the letter of the law, but had never been enjoyed, were generally very imperfectly understood, and rarely claimed by our ancestors; that even these legal, constitutional privileges
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were encumbered with a thousand legal customs, which they patiently submitted to, although they would exceed the patience of a modern Frenchman; that they felt and discovered infinitely more zeal for their religious, than for their civil liberty, and would have been contented with half the privileges their posterity enjoy for an act of toleration. It will appear, that the Kings, by whom the charters were granted, were not despotic Kings; that they constitutionally possessed the executive, not the supreme legislative power, of which they only made a part; that in all questions of magnitude, they were under the control of the other parts of the legislative power. That our ancestors were subjects of the Kings of England, not as the inhabitants of Guyenne formerly were, or as those of the Electorate of Hanover are now, but subjects of an English parliamentary King; Englishmen in the fullest sense of the word, with
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the same habits and manners, speaking the same language, governed by the same maxims, customs, and laws, with scarce any distinction, but the latitude and longitude of their new residence.

That if their charters were granted without the concurrence of parliaments, it was not because a parliament had no right to interfere, but because they did not in those days appear of importance enough to be agitated in the great council of the nation.

That although by their charters, our ancestors were empowered to make by-laws for their own local convenience, they were nevertheless expressly and formally restrained from making laws repugnant to the laws of England; and were universally understood, both there and here, to owe, in common with
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all Englishmen, an obedience to the laws, from which no King could release them, because no King could dispense with the laws. That from this parliamentary authority, they never wished, until of late, to be emancipated, but would rather have fled to it for protection, from the arbitrary encroachments of a James, or a Charles, armed with the usurpations, and abuses, of privy seals, benevolences, proclamations, star chambers and high commission courts, and from the enormities of the two succeeding reigns; that such were the practices of the times, when our early charters bear their dates, that if they were not granted by parliamentary Kings, they were granted by tyrants, and we shall gain nothing by recurring to first principles.

That no political society can subsist, unless there be an absolute supreme power lodged somewhere in the society, has been
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universally held as an uncontrollable maxim in theory, by all writers on government, from Aristotle down to Sidney and Locke, and has been as universally adopted in practice, from the despotism of Morocco, to the republic of St. Marino ; as long as government subsists, subjects owe an implicit obedience to the Laws of the supreme power, from which there can be no appeal but to Heaven. We for some years past have been multiplying ineffectual resolves, petitions, and remonstrances, and advancing claims of rights, &c. our petitions have at last been neglected, or rejected, or censured ; the principles on which we found our claims, have been formally denied. To what, or to whom, shall we have recourse ? Shall we appeal to the King of Massachusetts Bay, to the King of Connecticut, to the King of Rhode Island, against the King of Great Britain, to rescind the acts of parliament of Great Britain, to dispense with

with the Laws, to which as a necessary and efficient part of that body, he has so recently given his assent? Ridiculous as these questions may appear, I am afraid they are but too much of a piece with doctrines which have been lately broached, inculcated every where, and almost every where received. The Colonies are constitutionally independent of each other: They formally acknowledge themselves loyal and dutiful subjects of his Majesty George the Third; but severally claim an exemption from the authority of the British parliament. A doctrine so repugnant to the ideas of all our fellow-subjects in Great Britain, can, I trust, have no place in your assembly. The business you have to transact, is too serious to be trifled with; the confidence reposed in you, too sacred to be sacrificed to idle sophistry and visionary distinctions; the fate of America, may depend on your resolves; they should be founded on prin-

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ciples that are plain and intelligible, that are marked with the authority of universal opinions and truths.

The supreme power of the British parliament over her Colonies, was ever, till very lately, as universally acknowledged, by ourselves, as by our fellow-subjects in England. It usurps no claim to infallibility in its opinions, but gives the subject a legal right of petitioning, remonstrating, of proposing plans of reformation and redress. Nevertheless, though it pretends not to infallibility, like all other governments, it requires an implicit obedience to its laws, and has a right to enforce it. A tribe of savages unrestrained by laws, human or divine, may live in some harmony, and endure for ages, because in the state of nature there are at the most but two or three subjects to contend about, and the individuals are reciprocally over-awed by the natural rights of private

ate revenge. But in civil society, composed as it commonly is, of such an infinite number of heterogeneous and discordant principles and interests, in trade, in politics, and religion, where subjects of contention present themselves by thousands every hour; no constitution can subsist a moment, without a constant resignation of private judgment to the judgment of the public.

What part then, Gentlemen, have you left you to act, but to propose, with the modesty of subjects, some practicable plan of accommodation, and to obey? Shall the time of so respectable an assembly be squandered, in advancing claims of right, that have been urged and rejected a thousand times; that have been heard, considered, solemnly debated, and decided by the only power on earth, who has a right to decide them? Shall the opinions and

desires of a small part of the community, prevail against the opinions and desires of the majority of the community? What new species of eloquence can be invented to persuade? What new logic to convince the understandings of our fellow-subjects? Shall the British senate be governed by the pernicious maxims of a Polish diet, and the *veto* of a single member, or of a few members, however distinguished by extraordinary wisdom and virtue, obstruct or suspend, or annul the legislation of a great nation?

Those wise and virtuous citizens themselves hold such doctrines in derision. While a question is in agitation, they debate with freedom, but they claim no blind submission to their opinions, no authority, but the authority of their arguments. They arrogate not to themselves, a monopoly of all the wisdom, and all the
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virtue in the nation. When the question is decided, they submit their private speculative opinions, to the opinion of the majority, to the law of the land. They revere the law, and make it the rule of their conduct.

You, therefore, Gentlemen, the delegates of a very numerous and respectable people, will surely think it below the dignity of your character, to assemble, with the passions and language of a common town meeting, to sit in judgment, like some foreign imperial power on the decrees of a British legislature; to arraign the conduct of administration, in the lofty emphatic tone of a manifesto. Can such proceedings answer any purpose, but the dangerous purposes of exasperating and provoking the indignation and vengeance of all orders and degrees of men in the parent country? Of alienating the affections of
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the people here, seducing them from their allegiance, inflaming their passions, and exciting them to popular tumults and insurrections? The order and tranquillity of government frequently depend more upon the manners and morals of the people, than upon their laws and institutions. For the honour of our native country, there are, I believe, few instances on record of any people under a free government, who have passed through the same length of period, with so few civil commotions, though the powers of government have never been vigilantly exerted, nor the laws held in any extraordinary veneration. But the manners and morals of our countrymen are undebauched and innocent, compared with those of the inhabitants of older countries, where the instruments of corruption, and the incitements to vices and crimes are more general. The danger is nevertheless the same, or greater. There are no
people

people on earth more secure from the humiliating effects of poverty, more superior to the smiles or frowns of power, more unawed by the distinctions of birth and fortune, more confident or tenacious of their own opinions, or more on a level with all the world in their conversation and behaviour. The passions of such men, agitated by false principles, and mistaken zeal, are more dangerous to the repose of the world, than the frenzy of the most dissolute and abandoned slaves. You will surely beware how you inflame the minds of such honest, deluded citizens, or the time may come, perhaps it is not very distant, that you will wish, when it will be too late, to calm the storm you have raised, and will tremble every moment, lest it burst on your own heads.

Upon the subject of a non-importation and non-exportation agreement, I am at a
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loss what to say; it has been so often and so warmly recommended, as a specific remedy for all our complaints, has received the sanction of such general authority, that I am afraid it will look like an affront to the understandings of my fellow-citizens, an apostacy from my native country, to insinuate the least doubt of its efficacy. Yet let me most earnestly conjure you, by the common love we bear to that country, by the gratitude we owe to the parent country, by the important trust reposed in you, as you value your present and future peace, and the interests and happiness of your posterity; beware how you adopt that measure, how you engage in that strange conflict of fullness and obstinacy, till you have given it the most calm and serious deliberation.

The efficacy of the measure, admitting it to be a practicable one, depends, I presume,

sume, upon the importance of our commerce with Great Britain; it is possible that people in general here may have been much deceived in this matter, by partial and exaggerated calculations, made under particular circumstances, during particular periods, to serve the purposes of party. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the exact value of it. But if we may trust to the authority of men of eminence, who have treated this subject as politicians at large, unbiaſſed by partial, local, or temporary views, men who have traced it through the books of custom-houses, merchants, brokers, manufacturers, &c. the best sources of information; if we can depend on the opinions of the most intelligent merchants of our own country; if we can believe our own eyes, every man of common observation, and reflection, must be assured, that the amount of British manufactures imported into this country,

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is very inconsiderable, compared with the opinions about it, that are so industriously circulated through all the Colonies, and so generally received. Let us examine by the same rule, the amount of the inland and coasting trade of Great-Britain, and her foreign trade with all the nations on earth; it will appear infinitely greater, than our countrymen in general (accustomed from the vanity natural to all mankind to consider the little scenes and transactions immediately under their eyes, as objects of the greatest magnitude) can form any adequate idea of. The resources of her trade are infinite, the combinations of it too various and complicated, the revolutions of it too sudden and frequent, to be easily explained or understood. But we may judge of it by the result and effect of the whole, whenever the astonishing power of the nation is called forth into exertion. Can we seriously believe, that this wealth and
power

power is derived almost entirely from her North American Colonies? Can we (who by our own confessions do not yet enjoy even all the necessaries of life) can we reasonably hope, to starve into compliance, so great, and so powerful a nation? Shall we punish ourselves, like froward children, who refuse to eat, when they are hungry, that they may vex their indulgent mothers? Or like desperate gamesters, stake at one throw, our small, but competent and happy fortunes, against the successive stakes, the accumulated wealth of ages? We may tease the mother country, we cannot ruin her. Let us beware how we engage in such an unequal contest, lest while we are giving her a slight wound, we receive a mortal one.

If, notwithstanding, we are confident, that the measure of a non-importation and non-exportation agreement, bids fair to be

a successful one, it certainly behoves us as men, and as christians, to be sure that it is a just measure. A combination to ruin, or to obstruct the trade of a fellow-citizen, who happens to differ from us in his religious or political opinions, adopted in passion, prosecuted by the intrigues of a cabal, by innuendoes, insinuations, threatenings, and publicly signed by large numbers of leading men, would, I presume, be a manifest violation of the laws of God and man, and would, on conviction, be severely punished in every court of justice in the universe. In what colours then will appear, the combinations of a large and respectable body of subjects, against the supreme power of the community ; adopted from the same motives, prosecuted by the same arts, and publicly signed, in the face of the whole world ? Happily for us, by the generous and noble spirit of the British constitution, our own constitution, the crime of treason, which in
almost

almost every other country is vague and undefined, often in the breast of a venal and corrupt Judge, and made not to warn, but to ensnare the people, is exactly and circumstantially ascertained and defined.

Shall we abuse the generosity and beneficence of laws, made for our protection? Shall we skulk behind the letter of the law, while we wage war against the spirit of it? Because our ancestors had foreseen the possibility of the subject's levying arms against the state in passion and despair, but knew no instance on record, of their having meditated, in cold blood, its destruction, and had therefore made no regular provision against an enormity, which they presumed could never happen.

It is, I believe, sufficiently notorious, that there are great numbers of our countrymen, from one end of the continent to the other,
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who are averse from this measure, some of them from opinion, others from interest, and many from downright necessity.

For the sake of common humanity, Gentlemen, disdain to co-operate, with handbills, with news-papers, with the high menacing resolves of common town-meetings; do not conspire with them, to reduce, under the pains and penalties of disgrace and infamy, thousands of your fellow-citizens, to the cruel alternative, of involving themselves, their wives and children, in indigence and wretchedness; or of being publicly branded and pointed out by the frantic multitude, as apostates, and traitors to their country.

Let us, in the name of common sense and decency, be consistent. Shall we, Proteus like, perpetually change our ground, assume every moment some new and strange
shape,

shape, to defend, to evade? Shall we establish
 distinctions between internal and external
 taxation one year, and laugh at them the
 next? Shall we confound duties with taxes,
 and regulations of trade with revenue laws?
 Shall we rave against the preamble of the
 law, while we are ready to admit the enact-
 ing part of it? Shall we refuse to obey the
 Tea-Act, not as an oppressive act, but as a
 dangerous, a sole precedent of taxation,
 when every post-day shews us a precedent,
 which our forefathers submitted to, and
 which we still submit to, without murmur-
 ing? Shall we move heaven and earth, against
 a trifling duty, on a luxury, unknown to nine
 tenths of the globe, unknown to our ances-
 tors! despised by half the nations of
 Europe! which no authority, no necessity
 compels us to use? There are thousands of
 honest industrious families, who have no re-
 sources, but in the consequences of expor-
 tation and importation. Shall we levy a tax
 upon these innocent citizens, a tax unheard-
 of,

of, disproportionate, a tax never suggested by the most inhuman tyrant! A tax to the amount of their daily bread? Reflect one moment, on the terms, in which the resolves of every town-meeting on this continent speak of the Boston port-bill; although it is little more than a temporary suspension of the trade of that city, until restitution, which God and man calls aloud for, be made. And although the ports, at a very small distance from Boston, and every other port on the continent, is as free as ever, shall we multiply these calamities ten thousand fold? For such calamities must be the inevitable consequences of a non-importation and non-exportation agreement. You ought therefore to be confident, that it will prove effectual before you adopt it. Can any man seriously believe this, who is tolerably acquainted with the history and present state of these Colonies; who has visited our principal cities and towns, and
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has observed by what means they have risen to their wealth and importance, how they daily increase, and how their inhabitants subsist? The horrid punishments, inflicted by despotic Princes, are commonly of little avail, against a contraband trade, where any trifling extraordinary profit is an irresistible temptation. What can we expect from a loose agreement, where the sole subsistence of thousands is at stake? In all trading nations, where there are duties or prohibitions, there are smugglers; there ever were, and ever will be, until we find some nation, where every individual is a patriot or a saint.

Such an agreement will have the defect and impotence of laws framed on monkish ideas of purity, against the indelible feelings and passions of humanity. Can you hope, by promises, by extorted promises, to restrain men from carrying on a clandestine

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tine trade with Great Britain, who trade every day with our inveterate enemies, in defiance of all law, and who grow rich by the spoils of the fair trader? Will it not rather happen, as it has happened already, that province will smuggle against province, citizen against citizen, till we are weary, and ashamed of being the dupes of each other, and become the laughing-stock of the whole world?

Let us no longer deceive ourselves with the vain hopes of a speedy repeal of the Tea Act, because we triumphed in the repeal of the Stamp Act; the Acts themselves are totally different in their principles and their operation; the occasion by no means similar. We have advanced from one extravagant claim to another, made such sudden turnings and windings, taken such wild and rapid flights, that the boldest of our
followers

followers can follow us no longer ; our most zealous advocates are ashamed to plead a cause, which all men, but ourselves, condemn. Can we any longer doubt that our friends, on the other side of the Atlantic, as well as our enemies, although they may differ in the mode of exercising the authority of parliament over us, are almost universally agreed in the principle ? Are we not convinced from a thousand testimonies, that the clamour against us, is universal, and loud ? Is this, Gentlemen, a season to frighten the parent country into a repeal ? No man of spirit in private life, even on the slightest quarrel, will submit to be bullied, and exposed to the scorn and derision of the little circle he lives in. Can we seriously hope, that a great nation, a proud nation, will be insulted and degraded, with impunity, by her Colonies, in the face of every rival

kingdom in Europe? Let us then, Gentlemen, relinquish for ever, a project fraught with absurdity and ruin. Let your constituents hope, that the occasion of such an important assembly will not be wantonly squandered in opprobrious reproaches, in bidding defiance to the mother country, but in digesting and proposing some new plan of accommodation, worthy her notice and acceptance. Disputes are generally vain and endless, where there are no arbitrators to award, no judges to decree; where arguments, suspected to be drawn from interest and passion, are addressed to interest and passion, they produce no conviction. We may ring eternal changes upon taxation and representation, upon actual, virtual, and non-representation. We may end as we began, and disagree eternally: but there is one proposition, a self-evident proposition, to which all the world give their assent,

assent, and from which we cannot withhold ours; that whatever taxation and representation may be, taxation and government are inseparable. On the subject of taxation the authority of Mr. Locke is generally quoted by our advocates, as paramount to all other authority whatever. His Treatise on Government, as far as his ideas are practicable with the corrupt materials of all governments, is undoubtedly a most beautiful theory, the noblest assertion of the unalienable rights of mankind. Let us respect it as the opinion of a wise and virtuous philosopher and patriot, but let us likewise, as good subjects, revere the laws of the land, the collected wisdom of ages, and make them the sole rule of our political conduct. Let not Mr. Locke be quoted partially by those who have read him, to mislead thousands who never read him. When he is brought as an authority,
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that no subject can be justly taxed without his own consent, why do not they add his own explanation of that consent? *i. e.* "The consent of the majority, giving it either by themselves, or their representatives chosen by them." Do we compose the majority of the British community? Are we, or are we not of that community? If we are of that community, but are not represented, are we not in the same situation with the numerous body of copyholders, with the inhabitants of many wealthy and populous towns; in short, with a very great number of our fellow-subjects, who have no votes in elections? Shall we affirm that these are all virtually represented, but deny that we are so; and at the same time be too proud to solicit a representation? Or under the trite and popular pretences of venality and corruption, laugh at it as impracticable? Shall we plunge at once into

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anarchy, and reject all accommodation with a government, (by the confession of the wisest men in Europe, the freest and the noblest government on the records of history) because there are imperfections in it, as there are in all things, and in all men? Are we confederates, or allies, or subjects of Great-Britain? In what code of laws, are we to search for taxation, under the title and condition of requisition, as we understand the word? In what theory of government, ancient or modern? Is it to be found any where on earth, but in modern harangues, modern pamphlets? And in these only as temporary expedients. The supply of government must be constant, certain, and proportioned to the protection it affords; the moment one is precarious, the other is so too; the moment it fails, civil society expires. We boast much of our bountiful compliance with the requisitions made during

ring the last war, and in many instances with reason ; but let us remember and acknowledge, that there was even then more than one rich province that refused to comply, although the war was in the very bowels of the country. Can Great-Britain then depend upon her requisitions in some future war a thousand leagues distant from North-America, in which, as we may have no immediate local interest, we may look perhaps with little concern.

From the infancy of our Colonies to this very hour, we have grown up and flourished under the mildness and wisdom of her excellent laws ; our trade, our possessions, our persons have been constantly defended against the whole world, by the fame of her power, or by the exertion of it. We have been very lately rescued by her from enemies, who threatened us with
 slavery

slavery and destruction, at the expence of much blood and treasure, and established after a long war (waged on our accounts, at our most earnest prayers) in a state of security, of which there is scarce an example in history. She is ever ready to avenge the cause of the meanest individual among us, with a power respected by the whole world. Let us then no longer disgrace ourselves by illiberal, ungrateful reproaches, by meanly ascribing the most generous conduct to the most sordid motives : we owe our birth, our progress, our deliverance to her ; we still depend on her for protection ; we are surely able to bear some part of the expence of it ; let us be willing to bear it. Employ then, Gentlemen, your united zeal and abilities in substituting some adequate, permanent, and effectual supply, (by some mode of actual representation) in the place of uncertain,

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ineffectual requisitions, or in devising some means of reconciling taxation, the indispensable obligation of every subject, with your ideas of the peculiar and inestimable rights of an Englishman.

These are objects worthy a Congress ; measures, that will confer lasting benefits on your country, and immortal honour on yourselves.

If, on the contrary, like independent states, you arrogate to yourselves the sole right of judging and deciding in your own cause ; if you persist in denying the supreme power of Parliament, which no Parliament will ever renounce, like independent states, we have no appeal but to the God of battles. Shall we dare lift up our eyes to that God, the source of truth and justice, and implore his assistance in
such

such a cause? There are causes, where, in spite of the ridiculous tenets of pious, deluded enthusiasts, or of the wicked and monstrous doctrines of slaves and tyrants; the very principles, the original principles on which civil society depends, require, where God and Nature call aloud for resistance. Such causes existed in the horrid catalogue of oppressions and crimes, under a Philip the Second, a Catherine of Medicis, and in the list of grievances, during one period at least, of the reign of the ill-educated, the ill-advised, the unhappy Charles; on such melancholy occasions, men of sentiment, spirit, and virtue, the only genuine sons of liberty, engage in the honourable cause of freedom, with God on their side, and indignantly sacrifice every advantage of fortune, every endearment of life, and life itself. Do such causes exist now among us?

Did

Did they ever exist? Are they likely to exist?

Open, if it be not too late, the eyes of our infatuated countrymen; teach them to compare their happy situation, with the wretchedness of nine tenths of the globe; shew them the general diffusion of the necessaries, the conveniences and pleasures of life, among all orders of people here; the certain rewards of industry, the innumerable avenues to wealth, the native, unsubdued freedom of their manners and conversation; the spirit of equality, so flattering to all generous minds, and so essential to the enjoyment of private society, the entire security of their fortunes, liberty, and lives; the equity and lenity of their civil and criminal justice, the toleration of their religious opinions and worship.

Teach

Teach them to compare these invaluable privileges and enjoyments with the abject and miserable state of men debased by artificial manners, lost to all generous and manly sentiment; alternately crouching and insulting, from the vain and humiliating distinctions of birth, place and precedence; trembling every moment for their liberty, their property, their consciences, and their lives; millions toiling, not for themselves, but to pamper the luxury and riot of a few worthless, domineering individuals, and pining in indigence and wretchedness: Save them from the madness of hazarding such inestimable blessings, in the uncertain events of a war, against all odds, against invasions from Canada, incursions of savages, revolt of slaves, multiplied fleets and armies, a war which must begin where wars commonly end, in the ruin of our trade, in the surrender of our ports and capitals, in the misery
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of thousands. Teach them in mercy, to be-
ware how they wantonly draw their swords
in defence of political problems, distinctions,
refinements, about which the best and the
wisest men, the friends as well as the enemies
of America, differ in their opinions, lest
while we deny the mother-country every
mode, every right of taxation, we give her
the rights of conquest.

F I N I S.